

Docket No. 60,426-614 (2003P04688US)

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 29-37. Please add new claims 41 and 42.

1-19. (Cancelled)

20. (Previously Presented) A sensor assembly for measuring seatbelt forces comprising:

a rigid member having a first end for supporting a seat belt portion and a second end for attachment to a vehicle structure;

a strain gage mounted on said rigid member between said first and second ends for measuring the strain exerted on said rigid member by a tension force applied to the seat belt portion; and

an electrical connector mounted to said rigid member adjacent to said strain gage for receiving strain measurements from said strain gage and transmitting said measurements to a central processor to determine the magnitude of the tension force.

21. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 20 wherein said rigid member is a metallic plate defined by a length, width, and thickness with said length being greater than said width and said thickness being significantly less than said length and said width.

22. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 20 wherein said rigid member includes a neck portion positioned between said first and second ends having a width that is less than the width of said first and second ends and wherein said strain gage is mounted on said neck portion.

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23. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 22 wherein said first end includes an elongated slot for a loop attachment to the seat belt portion and said second end includes at least one aperture for receiving a fastener for attachment to the vehicle structure.

24. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 23 wherein said electrical connector is mounted to said rigid member adjacent to said second end between said aperture and said neck portion.

25. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 20 wherein said electrical connector includes a main body portion for supporting at least one electrical component, said main body portion being directly mounted to said rigid member.

26. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 25 wherein said main body member comprises a rigid housing member and wherein said at least one electrical component comprises a microprocessor mounted within said rigid housing member.

27. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 20 wherein said first end of said rigid member is positioned at an angle relative to said second end of said rigid member.

28. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 27 wherein said rigid member includes a necked portion that is narrower than said first and second ends with said first end being positioned at an angle relative to said necked portion.

29-37. (Cancelled)

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38. (Previously Presented) A method for measuring seatbelt forces for controlling airbag deployment comprising the steps of:

providing a sensor assembly including a rigid plate having a first end secured to a seatbelt portion, a second end secured to a vehicle structure, and a narrow neck portion interconnecting the first and second ends;

mounting a strain gage directly to the rigid plate on the narrow neck portion;

mounting an electrical connector directly to the rigid plate between the strain gage and the second end; and

measuring strain on the rigid plate due to seatbelt tension force with the strain gage.

39. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 38 including the step of mounting a printed circuit board to the electrical connector.

40. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 38 including the step of mounting an electronic control unit to the electrical connector.

41. (New) A method according to claim 38 including providing the electrical connector with a main body portion, supporting at least one electrical component on the main body portion, and directly mounting the main body portion to the rigid plate.

42. (New) A method according to claim 41 wherein the main body portion comprises a rigid housing member and the at least one electrical component comprises a microprocessor and including mounting the microprocessor within the rigid housing member.